John Siniari-Art

XII-Reflection

The reaction to this unit was one of admiration for the pure beauty of the equine form, somewhat tempered by the very managed and controlled way the horses are handled and exploited. I think the understanding was gained that although the horses are well-fed and in apparently fine shape, through interbreeding they have departed from their true nature and are nervous and kept within certain restricted areas, both in a physical sense of limitation to certain areas and in a utilitarian sense in the way they are kept in such fine condition for one purpose, that of participating in and hopefully winning races. This lends a certain air of the circus, of sports or show business to their whole existence and this has a saddening effect when you consider the nature of the animal in its untamed, wild state. These feelings can be qualified as surprises as they are not expected when you first enter the doors of the racetrack building but are struck by these realizations upon actually viewing the horses and their condition in life.

Artistically one is struck by the difficulty of portraying actual horses in motion, as opposed to working from photographic images or paintings. Their constant motion makes any attempt at conveying the appearance of the horses as a whole quite challenging, and one is forced instead to concentrate on separate and distinct portions of their anatomy, piecing the results together to form a coherent whole in the class or studio while making reference to photographs or other images. This process runs contrary to the very reason for the art component of the trip.

If any changes were made to such trips in the future they would be to instruct the students to concentrate on specific areas of the horses such as heads or hooves. More emphatically a better selection of a site for the purpose of studying horse anatomy might be a farm or stable where they could be viewed unencumbered by the accoutrements of the racing game and in more still postures such as grazing or walking slowly at their own chosen pace.

I personally learned, for all the above stated reasons, the value of scouting out potential field trip sites individually prior to selecting them as the destination of a group field trip.